

Poem of My Hope

Jack Christian

How is it that Coraleigh is again a mermaid?
and the Piper Cubs are off, and I'm with a wish
to be the kind of barn with doors all over?
In the ballfield here the puddle behind second
mirrors the sky perfectly. It sits by the tree
with its heart punched and by the tree that keeps
the scoreboard. It sits between the red bleachers.
There's a powerline I follow, and my friends
follow also, and thereby we string-up our residences
and undertake progressive dinners and performance
parties. You know how we are in the first winter
emergency. This month, Julia is down and frequent
in the backyard. We've started to pray, and make a point
of eating together. She's annoyed I called Connecticut
a dead sea-creature, mad I said her big cousin is easier
than making babies and her children should be terrified
or else content to house their unknown hostility
until it localizes as colon cancer. What's crazy is
how a family is its own school of painting, how in mine
the men carve a valley and the women carve their dresses
and when they get together their favorite color is skin.
My bigoted aunt keeps a plate for me. She puts her arms
like that. She taught me clarinet. It's obvious that these
are white houses and those are white rocks and there
is the graveyard we enjoy because it comforts us,
because it hides death but insists death is not hidden
from us, and one day we'll lie around each other. Julia
you say you think about this. So then, consider me
in the act of bringing a thing over to you. I'm waiting
by the fence that fronts our street where I'm sure
this is the light we can practice with. And that man
in the next lot, he is *our* uncle, who grew tall, and has stood
for the decade since he gave up the church and became
the hoop at the end of the driveway.

Gladetown Cemetery

I took my car to it. It was covered in ivy.
There were deer. I saw a turtle. The markers
looked like motorcycle plates. Some were poured
of concrete. The N's and S's were backwards.
I was talking to Phil about it. Right then
on my cellphone. I saw a ghost in there. I almost
expected to. It was two-feet tall and quiet.
It went between the grave divots. It had a kind
of business. I don't know what it was. It was
a skinny man. He pushed a small-wheeled carriage.
He was made of bluestone. His legs were long.
It was a skunk. I said to Phil, it's a dog that started
floating. Or, how small off-leash dogs will glow.
It had a nest of cub-ghosts. It started to disappear
to places. It wanted out of there. That's what
was coming through to me. This was at dusk.
Exactly dusk. The ghost shrank with the darkness.
I stepped in a mud puddle. I thought I'd go down
Rt. 27. Rt. 27 seemed like the best way home.